



Quarterly Report
CROATIA: POLITICAL PARTY BUILDING AND PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00
and
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AEP-A-00-95-00038-00
January 1 to March 31, 2002¹

I. SUMMARY

This quarter was marked by the tenth anniversary of international recognition of Croatia as well as by turmoil within the governing coalition, which brought the country to the brink of snap elections. Although calm for the time being, recent events demonstrate the need for continued political party and parliamentary preparation in the event of early elections.

The principal political challenges in Croatia are to maintain political stability in government and to encourage greater responsiveness of governing institutions—particularly parliament and political parties—to public concerns. As Croatia seeks to integrate into Europe, a greater ability to represent public interests will enable the country to consolidate democratic political institutions over the next few years. The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) supports this process by assisting parliament and political parties in reaching out to constituencies such that citizens view government as more open, representative, and participatory.

This quarter, NDI focused on political party strategy development, working with the Institute's political partners at the executive and regional levels. The Youth Program was active holding strategy planning sessions with party youth organizations throughout Croatia, and the Local Councilors Program began a continuing series of seminars for newly established political party liaisons. In parliament, NDI continued its development of resource materials for the Sabor, worked with Caucus Chairs and members on communication strategies and tools, and began preparations for a study trip to Canada for parliamentary staff.

II. BACKGROUND

January 2002 marked the tenth anniversary of international recognition of the independent republic of Croatia. President Stjepan Mesic used this opportunity to express the need to continue speaking out about the period of Tudjman and the rule of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). The Patriotic War continues to be a focal point of attention, with

¹ In mid-March NDI exhausted its funds under the regional cooperative agreement (USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00) and began spending bridge funding received under USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AEP-A-00-95-00038-00. This report, therefore, details activities conducted and results achieved this quarter for both agreements.

cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) dominating the media and discussions among politicians.

The quarter also began with government turmoil in Zagreb. Social Democratic Party (SDP) Mayor of Zagreb Milan Bandic was arrested and charged with drunk driving and leaving the scene of an accident after a minor car accident. Following a recommendation by the SDP executive, Bandic resigned as mayor. Adding to the unrest in the Zagreb government, a rift developed within the city coalition between the SDP and the Croatian People's Party (HNS) after a dispute over the delayed approval of various projects, causing some HNS members to resign. This quickly raised many questions over the selection of a new mayor and the effects these events would have on the timing of city elections, while exposing both SDP and HNS to external and internal criticism.

Within the central government, coalition problems continued to swell, as was marked most notably by the re-election of the controversial Drazen Budisa to the leadership of the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs). This in turn created stress not only within the governing coalition but also within the HSLs, as the party consists of members who support Budisa and those who do not. When Budisa threatened to replace some of the HSLs ministers, including the popular Deputy Minister Goran Granic, the five HSLs ministers publicly stated that they planned to remain together as ministers or resign en masse. Speculation abounded over whether the coalition would hold together or if it would fall apart, possibly causing the formation of a "liberal caucus" and relegating HSLs to the opposition bench.

Issues of contention between Budisa and Prime Minister Racan of SDP caused a near-fatal collapse of the governing coalition as Budisa demanded the resignation of HSLs cabinet ministers, a redistribution of power within the coalition, an introduction of a veto right in the decision-making process of the coalition and changes to the government's reform package as well as Croatia's cooperation with the ICTY. This crisis was averted through an agreement among the coalition members that was reached on March 15. The agreement redefined the coalition's relationships, future cooperation, personnel changes, reform measures and cooperation with the International Monetary Fund, ICTY and neighboring countries. In addition, the HSLs nominated three new ministers, including Budisa as deputy prime minister (with Granic becoming the prime minister's deputy). After the agreement was announced, Budisa was quoted as saying, "HSLs and its president had no intention to give rise to a split in the coalition, nor did they desire to leave it."

The opposition party HDZ is also undergoing a pivotal leadership contest between Ivo Sanader, the current party president, and Ivic Pasalic, former domestic policy advisor to the late President Tudjman. Further complexities were introduced when, a mere 40 days before the electoral convention, a group of dissatisfied and prominent HDZ politicians decided to nominate Nikica Valentic, former prime minister and HDZ vice-president. Although Valentic declined to accept, his unexpected nomination as one of the most prominent members of HDZ's liberal, techno-managerial faction incited even more dramatic developments in the presidential race. The success of the HDZ will depend in part on its ability to portray itself as a party of the center-right as opposed to a party of nationalist right-wing extremism.

In this political environment, NDI's political party program continues to work with political parties to strengthen their organizational infrastructure and develop relationships with other community groups; enlist more women and youth into party leadership and engage

them in activities at all levels; link branch offices, elected officials and government representatives to voters; and assist members of parliament (MPs) and branch offices in undertaking coordinated voter outreach activities. At the same time, the parliamentary program is working with MPs and parliamentary administration to strengthen the functioning of parliamentary committees; assist MPs as they develop strategies to increase their effectiveness, become increasingly responsive to constituents, and engage in the work of their political parties; and strengthen the organizational development of party caucuses. NDI also maintains support for a well-balanced transition by assisting parliament and political parties in reaching out to constituencies such that citizens view government as more open, representative and participatory.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Political Party Development Program

Meetings with Secretary Generals of NDI's Political Partners: February 7- 15

NDI held a series of meetings with the secretaries general of the Institute's political partners² and reviewed with them NDI's upcoming program agenda. NDI plans to work with its partner parties as they involve and encourage the increased participation of women, youth, party branches and elected officials in party activities as these parties seek a second mandate at the national level. These inclusive strategies would involve party members at all levels working and communicating within the party and with the voters on the party's accomplishments, present programs and vision for the future. Also discussed was the need for election readiness seminars if and when premature elections were called. NDI then presented a list of its program components, from which the secretaries general selected areas important for their parties' future development and on which NDI should focus.

The table below shows the program components presented to and chosen by NDI's partner parties.

NDI PROGRAM	PARTY					
Local Councilors	HSS	SDP	LS	SDSS	HSLS	HNS
Party Coordinators	HSS	SDP	LS	SDSS	HSLS	HNS
Party Planning	HSS	SDP		SDSS	HSLS	HNS
Women	HSS	SDP		SDSS		
Youth	HSS	SDP	LS	SDSS		HNS
Branch Development			LS (Zagreb)			

² NDI met with the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Croatian People's Party (HNS), Croatian Peasants' Party (HSS), HSLS, Independent Democratic Serb Party (SDSS) and the Liberal Party (LS). A consultation with the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS) will take place after the party's annual convention in late March.

Youth Program

Seminar with HNS Youth Wing: Zagreb, January 19

NDI conducted a training seminar for 14 members of the HNS Youth Wing on January 19, with the assistance of Nicolas Ruskowski, director of NDI's political party program in Slovakia, and Goran Blasko, representative of the Slovenian Youth Party (SMS). The purpose of the seminar was to initiate the development of strategic planning for members of the HNS youth wing as well as for the creation of a National Youth Strategy.

During the first part of the seminar, the participants compiled and articulated their personal and party issues and values for the trainers. The second part of the seminar involved sharing experiences, with Blasko relating his experience with SMS and its involvement in community activities, while Ruskowski talked about his engagement in the youth wing of the Canadian Liberal Party. The last part of the seminar involved an analysis of the youth wing's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This analysis was then connected with the information shared at the beginning of the seminar and participants drafted a preliminary strategic plan. Participants will now begin to implement this plan, with technical assistance from NDI.

Seminar with LS Youth Wing: Daruvar, March 9

NDI met with Nenad Kocmur, acting vice-president of the LS Youth Wing, to discuss the wing's strengths and weaknesses. Although a lack of communication and coordination persists at the national level, the party continues to have active youth members at the local level. NDI then organized a strategic planning seminar for LS youth in Daruvar. (The LS branch office in Daruvar was chosen because its members are very active and party youth play an important role in party branch activities. Also, LS Daruvar participated in NDI's Local Branch Office Development Program in 2001 and worked with other branches to organize joint voter contact events.) LS President Zlatko Kramaric and General Secretary Helena Radin-Stimac directly encouraged party youth representatives to participate in the seminar.

On Saturday, March 9 the seminar was held with 12 participants, including 2 females and 10 males – 4 each from Daruvar, Zagreb and Osijek. Goran Blasko again assisted NDI in conducting the seminar, and as with the HNS Youth Wing, the participants were led through a series of exercises designed to assist them in developing strategic action plans. The participants then appointed one representative to be responsible for communication with NDI in order to continue their work on the strategic planning process.

Local Councilors Program

Orientation Training for Party Liaisons: Zagreb, March 5

On March 5 NDI conducted an orientation seminar for nine newly appointed liaisons of the Institute's partner parties. These parties' successes in the May 2001 local elections resulted in a large increase in the number of local councilors nationwide. In response, political parties created party liaison teams, responsible for coordinating the activities and information of their party's local councilors, and for supporting the links among the party, their elected representatives (local councilors and MPs) and voters. Coordination and support

by these new party coordinators are especially important as parties develop and maintain outreach activities.

First in a series of four, the multiparty seminar was led by the political party team, with assistance from Mary O'Hagan, Director of the Parliamentary Resource Center for the Liberal Democratic Party of Great Britain. O'Hagan assisted the party liaisons in developing a better understanding of the different types of internal and external party communication tools and how they could use these tools within their own party. The liaisons then created their own job descriptions, which were supplied to their respective parties. In addition, participants from HSLs, SDP and HNS volunteered to host the remaining three seminars in April, May and June, respectively.

POLITICAL PARTY	# PARTICIPANTS
HSS	3
SDP	2
HNS	1
HSLs	1
LS	1
SDSS	1

Party Consultations

SDP Headquarters: Zagreb, March 18

On Monday, March 18 NDI, along with O'Hagan, met with SDP Public Relations Director Karolina Leakovic at the SDP headquarters to discuss party communication techniques. Leakovic identified as problems the lack of communication among spokespeople of various ministries and herself as well as difficult relationships among party officials and journalists. The group discussed ways to better organize communication among party headquarters, the membership and party officials in the ministries.

Parliamentary Development Program

Parliamentary Resource Materials Development

One component of NDI's Parliamentary Development Program has been to provide materials for MPs and the administration on various issues. Materials currently being prepared are:

- A speech delivered by Information Commissioner of Canada John Reid to Croatian MPs on access to information along with a set of materials from his office, are in the process of being translated and will be distributed to MPs during the next quarter.
- Technical assistance to the secretary general of the Sabor on draft Rules for Public Accessibility has been provided.
- An edited paper on the role of MPs in the Canadian House of Commons that explains the duties of MPs and ways to balance their roles as representatives of both voters and parties has been translated and distributed to GONG interns and their MPs.
- Documentation on quorum sizes and requirements has been drafted and translated.
- A comparison of the old and new parliamentary rules of procedure is near completion. The English translation is being adjusted and annotations, a table of contents and index are being added.

Parliamentary Consultations

Meeting with Danica Orcic, Secretary General of the Parliament and Heike Badenhausen, German Stiftung for International Law

Given that both NDI and the German Stiftung for International Law are implementing parliamentary development programs, the two institutions agreed to explore ways to work together. Due to the time constraints of the secretary general of the parliament, it was agreed that they would work with a core group of 10 to 15 parliamentary staff members to identify the current issues facing parliamentary staff and develop a plan of action that takes into consideration the offers of support from various international organizations. The secretary general has given her support and NDI will now prepare a written proposal for the process.

Consultation with HSLC Caucus: March 13

NDI, along with O'Hagan, met with members of the HSLC caucus, including Zrinjka Glovacki Bernardi and Zeljko Pavlic, the deputy chairs of the caucus, and Darinka Orel, the deputy chair of the Committee for Labor, Social Welfare and Health, to discuss caucus organization, communication and the relationship between the party and parliamentary caucus.

O'Hagan described the services and tools provided by the Parliamentary Resource Center as a source of party support for MPs, including daily bulletins, weekly current themes, briefing materials on various issues and standard letters – all of which are produced regularly and are available on the party website and by e-mail. O'Hagan suggested that the HSLC Caucus start a caucus resource center through the creation and distribution of daily bulletins, and then build from that base. The provision of these resources would enable MPs to receive support, and would strengthen the position of the caucus within the party and build its sovereign status. The HSLC caucus members were receptive to the suggestions and have begun to formulate a plan for the establishment of a caucus resource center.

Individual Ad Hoc Consultations/Meetings/Relationship Building

January 16 – NDI had a lengthy discussion with SDP MP Dijana Cizmadija and reviewed the last two years of work and changes specifically concerning gender politics. The changes have been significant—the constitution was amended to formally recognize gender equality, a gender committee was established in the parliament and a national strategy for gender equality was adapted by the parliament.

January 23 – NDI met with SDP MPs Sanja Kapetanovic, chair of the Subcommittee for Youth, and Dijana Cizmadija in order to provide information on communication strategies.

January 24 and 25 – Marijana Petir, the newest HSS MP, sought assistance from NDI on a speech she was preparing for the HSS Convention to be held on January 26.

January 31 – NDI met with Dino Debeljuh, MP (IDS), Tonci Tadic, MP (HSP), Dubravka Horvat, MP (SDP), and Marija Lugaric, MP (SDP) during a visit to the Sabor. The Institute also consulted with HSS MP Marijana Petir on caucus communication and constituency outreach.

February 14 – NDI met with Daniela Sraga, director of the Sabor Information-Documentation Service, to discuss computer training for parliamentary staff and MPs. It was agreed that NDI would administer a survey in March 2002 to parliamentary staff and MPs to assess their computer training needs and design a relevant program.

Computer Training for Parliamentary Staff

Following the meeting held with Daniela Sraga, director of the Sabor Information-Documentation Service, on February 14, 2002, NDI drafted a computer training needs survey and forwarded it to Sraga so she could include her comments and forward it on to staff and MPs. It is anticipated that the necessary information will be collected by mid-April, at which time NDI will analyze the data and design the most appropriate training program.

Study Trip to Canada for Croatian Parliamentary Staff

NDI Croatia submitted a proposal to and received \$40,000 CAD (approximately \$25,000 USD) from the Canadian Embassy in Croatia for a study trip to Ottawa, Canada, from June 1 to 8, 2002, for staff members from the Sabor and GONG. The objectives of the study mission are: to expose Croatian parliamentary staff to skills and practices as implemented in the Canadian House of Commons in order to increase their professional capacity so that they can become more effective and efficient in performing their roles and responsibilities; to create a core group of senior parliamentary staff members that would help the secretary general of the Sabor develop and implement a comprehensive parliamentary staff development plan; and to create links between Croatian and Canadian parliamentary staff members, thereby opening possibilities for information exchange.

Collaboration with GSV

A tripartite group composed of representatives from the government, unions and employers (known by its Croatian acronym GSV), is reviewing the new employment law. The group requested assistance from NDI in preparing a presentation on the law in the Sabor. NDI agreed to do the following:

- Assist GSV in shaping the format of the report so that it sets out the main issues. The format would be designed to make it easier for MPs to understand and would promote a greater understanding of the core issues underlying the position of GSV on the proposed legislation.
- Encourage the parliamentary committees responsible for the legislation to adopt a public hearing process, which will promote greater understanding among stakeholders, the public and the Sabor on the issues underlying the proposed legislation. In addition, NDI will provide the committees with a template on how to manage and conduct public hearings.

Other Program Activities

NDI Women's Conference: Trafficking in Human Beings, March 1 – 4

Women representatives from five Croatian political parties participated in an NDI-sponsored regional women's conference held in Warsaw, Poland, on the issue of women trafficking, which was sponsored through a grant from the National Endowment for Democracy. Participants from Croatia included: Karolina Leakovic, the SDP public relations

director; Kristina Budimir Kunic, assistant to the HSLs secretary general; Marijana Petir, newly elected HSS MP; Sonja Koenig, an HNS councilor in the Zagreb Assembly; and Helena Stimac Radin, the LS secretary general. Natalija Bukovec, a newly elected city councilor in Karlovac and a member of the SDP Youth Presidency represented NDI.

In preparation for the conference, NDI, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its representative in Croatia, Lovorka Marinovic, provided the participants with information on human trafficking. As the Croatian participants had not had many opportunities to become involved with this issue, most of the information provided was new to them.

Interestingly, with the exception of Croatia, the other participating countries from the Balkan region came with a higher level of understanding of the trafficking issue and had signed an agreement with the Stability Pact to deal with the issue. As a result, the Croatian participants expressed their pleasure at becoming part of this Eastern European women's network and receiving pertinent information on human trafficking, and decided to become more involved within their parties in dealing with this issue.

GONG

Citizens' Hours

During this quarter, GONG organized 23 Citizens' Hours in 19 locations throughout Croatia, in the form of both radio shows (13) and panel discussions (10). Members of government, elected representatives and members of other professional sectors participated in the events, which were attended by over 700 people. One event of note was the Citizens' Hour organized in Enova on February 5. Approximately 150 people attended to participate in a discussion on housing problems for refugees, and the large turnout, mostly by Bosnian Croats, demonstrated how serious the problem of displaced persons is in this area.

Below is a chart summarizing Citizens' Hours for the quarter:

DATE	LOCATION	FORMAT	PARTICIPANTS
01/16/02	Sibenik	Radio Show	20
01/17/02	Slavonski Brod	Panel Discussion	45
01/21/02	Koprivnica	Panel Discussion	60
01/21/02	Koprivnica	Radio Show	5
01/21/02	Oriovac	Panel Discussion	90
01/23/02	Ogulin	Radio Show	15
01/24/02	Okucani	Radio Show	2
01/28/02	Pag	Radio Show	13
01/30/02	Krapina	Radio Show	13
01/31/02	Rijeka	Radio Show	5
02/04/02	Ivanic Grad	Radio Show	5
02/05/02	Enova	Panel Discussion	150
02/18/02	Radar	Panel	50

		Discussion	
02/19/02	Sibenik	Panel Discussion	70
02/20/02	Senj	Radio Show	5
02/20/02	Novska	Panel Discussion	20
02/20/02	Slavonski Brod	Radio Show	6
02/20/02	Osijek	Panel Discussion	50
02/21/02	Zagreb	Panel Discussion	60
02/25/02	Nova Gradiska	Panel Discussion	20
02/26/02	Sisak	Radio Show	14
02/27/02	Samobor	Radio Show	5
02/28/02	Rijeka	Radio Show	5

GONG Internship Program

During the month of January, six new students from the faculties of law and political science were selected to work in the Sabor as interns to MPs. In addition, three interns were selected to work in governmental offices – two in the Office for Strategic Development and one in the Office for Social Partnership. At the local level, there are currently seven interns working in local government offices in Slavonski Brod, Zagreb, Rijeka and Zadar. All are currently working in their assigned posts and GONG meets with both the interns and their sponsors regularly.

Observing Parliament

After the Christmas holidays, the Sabor reopened to the public for observation of its sessions, of which 29 citizens attended. Also during this quarter, 373 secondary school students visited parliament as part of the Monday Tour program. Below is a summary chart:

DATE	SECONDARY SCHOOL	# STUDENTS
01/21/02	Zagreb – Catholic High School	70
01/28/02	Varazdin – High School	50
02/04/02	Zagreb – Design and Fashion	30
	Zagreb – Gymnasium III	30
	Split – Economics	50
02/11/02	Zagreb – Gymnasium III	28
	Split – Gymnasium II	55
02/18/02	Zagreb – Gymnasium XVIII	60

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Political Party Program

- Objective:** *MPs and branch offices undertake coordinated voter outreach activities in targeted election districts.*
- Objective:** *Political parties evaluate their strategic, organizational and political performances and determine actions that optimize their strengths and minimize weaknesses. Parties link branch offices, elected officials and government representatives to the voters.*
- Objective:** *Parties enlist more women and youth into party leadership and engage them in activities at the local, county and national levels.*

- The HSS developed a strategy for the next national elections. The party plans to hold internal elections at all levels in order to increase internal stability. HSS has also committed to using women and youth in party activities at county centers. This quarter the party held eight of its own seminars (based on what they learned in the NDI workshops) to train its newly elected local councilors. Between 50 and 100 participants attended each session, and topics included economic issues, agriculture and tourism, development and infrastructure, local self-government, legal issues, health and social welfare, and crafts and small business.
- The SDP has MPs and other “banner carriers” engaging in direct voter contact at the local level. They are talking to voters about the party’s accomplishments and plans for the future. MPs are also venturing into HDZ-held areas, where they are well received by voters. SDP Secretary General Igor Dragovan stated that the party recognizes it must continue to reach out to voters and share with them the party’s accomplishments of the past two years in order to win the next elections.
- The SDSS unveiled its new logo, written in both Croatian and Cyrillic, at its party convention. The more inclusive logo is a direct result of an earlier strategic planning retreat sponsored by NDI, in which the party re-examined its current position and where it wanted to be within the Croatian political environment. Also at the convention, the SDSS elected four women into executive positions (up from zero). Secretary General Slobodan Popovic commented that when the SDSS began working with NDI in 1997, all it had was vision, but today the party holds a majority in nine municipalities and has a network of branch offices across the country.
- The SDP and the HSS are creating party liaison teams to work with their local councilors, and to improve internal communication, outreach, and external communication with voters.
- As a result of NDI’s seminar with HSLs in Karlovac, Stanislav Rozman, councilor in the City Council of Karlovac, made a request to the president of the city council that the Karlovac sessions be rescheduled in the afternoons and evenings to make the sessions more accessible to citizens.

Parliamentary Program

- Objective:** *Parliamentary committees are strengthened to review legislation, provide oversight of the executive branch, and involve the public and stakeholders in hearings on policy proposals and draft legislation.*
- Objective:** *Members of parliament develop strategies to strengthen their effectiveness, become increasingly responsive to constituents, and engage in the work of their respective political parties.*

Objective: *Parliamentary party caucuses develop organizational structures that meet the needs of members and provide an opportunity for all MPs to offer input on public policy issues or legislation.*

- Members of parliament are requesting and using materials from other western parliaments to increase their effectiveness in their day-to-day work. These materials will also strengthen the ability of committees to review legislation.
- As a result of consultations with NDI staff and guest trainer Mary O'Hagan, the HSLC Caucus is planning to create daily bulletins, which would be the start of the caucus resource center. This would enable MPs to better informed and strengthen the position of the HSLC Caucus within the party.

V. EVALUATION

The geographic diversity covered by the local councilors' program (Dalmatia, Eastern Slavonia, Slavonia, Zagreb, Karlovac and the war affected areas) together with the diversity of the political parties has given NDI a clear understanding that the next phase in assistance to elected councilors needs to be more tailored. Over the next quarter NDI will determine whether the Institute should invest its limited resources in the more politically advanced areas north of Zagreb, where parties and councilors have more access to resources and information, or focus its work on areas that are more politically underdeveloped.

NDI is in the process of developing more custom-made training events with each of the parties, which will require specific interest and effort. For that reason NDI suggested to the parties that, as a precondition for further work with local councilors, each party should appoint a local councilors' liaison at the national headquarters level. This person would be involved in all events NDI conducts with the party in the field and would be trained on networking with party local councilors and training methods. NDI's goal is to provide the parties with tools and examples of ways to develop mechanisms for networking among their local councilors.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Political Party Development Program

- Following the HSS strategic planning session in March, NDI will facilitate the youth organization's presentation of the plan to the HSS secretary general and executive board.
- Consultations will be held with IDS and SDSS on how to work with youth activists, as both parties are in the process of forming youth organizations.
- NDI will hold a strategic planning session with the HNS youth organization.
- NDI will continue to work with local party liaisons/coordinators. Seminars will be hosted by the following parties over the next three months: HSLC (April), SDP (May) and HNS (June).
- On May 18 and 19, NDI will hold a joint activity with the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (of Germany) on the development of election laws and will review the underlying principles of different election models.

Parliamentary Development Program

- Consultations will be held with caucus chairs on upcoming computer training and on developing specific communications strategies for party caucuses.
- Computer training will be designed and implemented for the Sabor Information – Documentation service (the parliamentary reading room).
- Communication workshops will be held for caucus members to develop specific tools and strategies.